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File Code: 3420 **Date:** March 17, 2008
Route To:

Subject: Sandia Mountain Douglas-fir Tussock Moth Site Visit

To: Cid H. Morgan, District Ranger, Sandia Ranger District

At the request of Allen Kelso, East Zone Silviculturist, Sandia Ranger District, Jerry Simon, Forester, Regional Office and I met with Allen and David Fox, Forester, Mountainair Ranger District, on Wednesday, March 6, 2008. Allen and David were to meet with a representative of the US Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss the possibility of a salvage project along the lower portion of Tejano Canyon (Sandia Crest National Scenic Byway) including Sulpher and Tree Springs Canyons. The project would involve salvaging trees recently killed during the Douglas-fir tussock moth outbreak that occurred in 2005 and 2006. Allen wanted me on hand to answer any questions that might come up about the DFTM. However, due to a change in priorities at the last minute, the representative from the Fish and Wildlife Service was not able to meet with Allen and David.

Since Jerry and I were already at the District office, Allen wanted us to look at the sites he was proposing for salvage and to discuss them with us. We visited two sites in the lower portion of Tejano Canyon, where tussock moth damages were heaviest. These were Cienega Canyon and an area between Sulpher Canyon and Tree Springs Canyon. Because of the steepness of the sites, Allen was proposing the sites be salvaged by helicopter logging. He showed us some of the possible landing sites for the trees and also discussed how the logs could be hauled out. Because there would be no commercial value to the dead trees being salvaged, Allen indicated the trees would be mainly offered as firewood to the public.

While Jerry, Allen, and David continued to talk about salvaging, I looked for signs of DFTM activity. My observations indicated that the tussock moth outbreak in Tejano Canyon and Cienega Canyon had collapsed from natural causes.

Allen took us next to a DFTM outbreak occurring in Las Huertas Canyon along State Highway 165. This outbreak was detected in 2007 during our annual aerial detection survey flight (refer to our 3410 letter dated November 13, 2007). Because tree mortality in this Canyon was widespread, tussock moth populations have probably been building to outbreak levels in since 2006. New, egg masses were plentiful on the trees examined indicating the outbreak would continue to cause additional defoliation in 2008. Because of the damages that have already occurred, it is recommended you let the outbreak run its course. DFTM outbreaks are generally short lived usually lasting 2-3 years before collapsing from natural causes.

If you have any questions concerning the tussock moth activity occurring on the Sandia Ranger District, please give me a call at 505.842.3287 or e-mail me at trogers@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Terrence J. Rogers
TERRENCE J. ROGERS
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cc: Alan Kelso
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